

reported yesterday on the hidden costs of the occupation of Iraq. We learned that the true cost so far is \$1.3 trillion, or nearly double the amount the administration has been talking and has requested. And the price tag could soar to nearly \$3.5 trillion if we continue on the administration's reckless course in Iraq.

The hidden financial costs of our involvement in Iraq are staggering, but yesterday we also learned that there are hidden human costs as well that are truly, truly heartbreaking.

CBS News reported last night that the suicide rate among veterans is over twice as great as the suicide rate for the general population. In 2005 alone, there were at least 6,256 suicides among veterans in the 45 States that provided data to CBS. That is an astonishing 17 suicides per day for just that one year.

Those statistics are for veterans of all wars, and they are shocking. But the statistics for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan are even more devastating. Veterans aged 20 to 24 have the highest suicide rate of all. For these young men and women, the suicide rate is two to four times higher than the suicide rate for the general population.

And yet another report published yesterday in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that the mental health problems of Iraq veterans are much greater than previously thought. It found that Iraq veterans are more likely to report alcohol abuse, family conflicts, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder after being home for 6 months than immediately after their return. The suicide statistics tell us that the real Iraq death toll is significantly higher than the official count of just over 3,860. And the mental health statistics tell us that the real number of wounded is much, much higher than the reported number of around 28,000.

All of this terrible news means that we can no longer sit around and do nothing about the occupation of Iraq. We must take action immediately, and we must take it in two ways.

First, America must do a much better job of meeting the physical and mental health needs of our veterans. The administration has underfunded and ignored the Veterans Administration system, leaving veterans stuck in a bureaucratic nightmare that stops them from getting the health care that they need. Congress has passed a bill that would help veterans to get care much faster. It improves conditions at VA hospitals and invests in new ways to treat physical and mental problems caused by the war. The President needs to sign that bill as soon as possible.

And, second, we must move immediately to end the occupation of Iraq and redeploy our troops. That is why I voted today for H.R. 4156, the Orderly and Responsible Iraq Redeployment Appropriations Act.

While the bill is not perfect, it essentially says that funds authorized for

Iraq will not be used to continue the occupation, but are to be used to achieve the safe and orderly redeployment of our troops out of Iraq.

That is what I and many others have been demanding, and that is what the American people have been asking. It is time to stop the death. It is time to stop the suffering. It is time to bring our brave troops home and do everything we can to help them and their families to rebuild their lives. Anything less is unacceptable and immoral.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRALEY of Iowa). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### AMERICANS ARE PRAYING FOR RAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, tonight Americans across the Southeast are praying for rain. As drought conditions have stretched from weeks into months, residents face a stark reminder of how one of our most precious resources, water, can also be one of our most unpredictable.

The lessons of natural disaster are too familiar to the good folks back home in Kansas. In the past year, nearly every county in Kansas has suffered from disastrous conditions.

The weather has been hard on many of us, but especially on our farmers and ranchers, who depend on nature to earn their living. It's hard to find words to express their concern, their worry. Many have worked the same acreage for decades, and they've always trusted that if they treat their land right, if they plow its soil and they plant it carefully and tend it for many months, it will reward them with a crop that will earn their living.

But in so many counties, disaster conditions have slashed crop yields. Ranchers face their own problems as animal feed prices soar.

Kansas farmers and ranchers are good hardworking people, but lately they've found that the land and the weather are betraying them. That's why it's so important that earlier this year Congress passed a critical agricultural disaster relief package. These funds helped Kansans continue to farm and ranch in spite of the ever-present threats of drought, fire and other catastrophes.

Today I urge America to come together once again to show the same compassion to our brothers and sisters in the Southeast. Farmers are finding

that no matter how much they care and the effort that they devote to their land, their crops simply won't grow. These hardworking families can't make ends meet and they need a helping hand from Congress.

I urge my colleagues to remember the struggles of farmers and ranchers in the Southeast, in Kansas and across America who continue to confront the challenge of this difficult weather.

And again, we're praying tonight for the rain for the Southeast, and it looks like we might get some rain, and we are just blessed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FLAKE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### THE ORDERLY AND RESPONSIBLE IRAQ REDEPLOYMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4156, the Orderly Responsible Iraq Redeployment Appropriations Act, just passed.

Let me be clear about why I voted for it. This legislation is a compromise that I hate, but it's the only way to move the agenda of the American people forward. This legislation is anything but perfect, but it does make important strides.

It requires the President to use funding to begin to redeploy U.S. soldiers out of Iraq within 30 days of enactment and sets a goal for complete redeployment by December 15, 2008.

It requires the President to implement a comprehensive diplomatic political and economic strategy to bring stability to Iraq. For the first time, the President will actually have a plan in Iraq.

It requires the President to report to Congress. It will end the secrecy that has surrounded everything about this war.

And it requires the President to accept what the rest of us know, that waterboarding is torture. It is a crime, and this bill says it's not going to be used in the interrogation of prisoners.

After World War II, we prosecuted Japanese soldiers for waterboarding U.S. prisoners of war. But the President's new Attorney General is walking around wondering about whether waterboarding is a crime.

House Republicans who voted "no" said they're willing to sacrifice the will of the American people at the altar of blind political obedience to the White House.

If Republicans in the Senate filibuster this bill, they'll be telling the American people to go away because